Government of India for entering into Free Trade Agreement with the E.U.;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto; and

(c)if so, how the Indian interest would be protected?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH):

(a) No formal proposal has been received from the United Kingdom which is a Member State of the European Union.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Outcome of Hong Kong round of WTO negotiations

1663. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Hong Kong round of WTO negotiations did not yield the desired results;

(b) whether another round of WTO negotiation is likely to take place to resolve the difference between developed and developing countries;

(c) if so, the reasons for failure of negotiations of Hong Kong;

(d) whether it is a fact the US-EU were not prepared to reduce subsidy in agriculture sector;

(e) if so, the reason for insisting not to reduce subsidy in agriculture sector; and

(f) when the other round of WTO negotiation is likely to take place?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH):

(a) to (f) The Sixth Session of the WTO Ministerial Conference was held in Hong Kong from from 13-18 December 2005. The Ministers at Hong Kong reviewed the ongoing negotiations under the Doha Work

Programme as per the mandate of the Ministers in Doha in November 2001 and WTO General Council Decision of 1st August 2004 (commonly called the "July Framework"). Certain decisions were taken at the Hong Kong Ministerial Conference and these decisions are reflected in the Ministerial Declaration adopted by the Ministers at the concluding session on 18th December 2005. Copies of this Declaration have been placed in the Parliament Library.

The current round of negotiations launched at Doha is scheduled to conclude in 2006 as agreed by the Ministers at Hong Kong. These negotiations are expected to follow the timelines agreed to by the Ministers based on the decision taken at Hong Kong. There is no proposal to launch another round of WTO negotiations. The Hong Kong Ministerial Conference has, *inter alia,* taken a decision to eliminate export subsidies in Agriculture by the year 2013, with substantial part to be eliminated in the first half of the Implementation Period and that of Cotton Export subsidies by the developed countries by the year 2006. Disciplines will be developed to achieve effective cuts in trade distorting domestic support consistent with the July Framework adopted by the General Council of the WTO on 1st August 2004. On Trade Distorting Domestic Support in Cotton, the Ministers agreed to reduce them more ambitiously than under whatever general formula tobe agreed in negotiations and that it should be implemented over a shorter period of time than generally applicable. In accordance with the decision taken at Hong Kong, the WTO Members have agreed to finalise the modalities of negotiations in Agriculture by 30th April 2006, with submission of draft schedules by Members on the basis of these modalities by 31st July 2006.

Implementation of SAFTA

†1664. SHRI MANGANI LAL MANDAL: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that for the implementation of South Asia Free Trade Areas Treaty (SAFTA), which was formed by six countries of South-Asia region, all the concerned countries except Pakistan have collectively completed the formalities of its implementation;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.